United Nations A/C.3/64/SR.10

General Assembly
Sixty-fourth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
23 December 2009
English
Original: French

Third Committee

Summary record of the 10th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 13 October 2009, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mr. Penke ..... (Latvia)

Contents

Agenda item 61: Social development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*)

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*)

(c) Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*)

Agenda item 104: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*)

Agenda item 62: Advancement of women (*continued*)

(a) Advancement of women (*continued*)

(b) Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (*continued*)

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

09-55553 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 61: Social development (*continued*)

(a) Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/C.3/64/L.9)

Draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.9: Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly

1. **Mr. Hassan** (Sudan), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.9 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the resolution sought to advance the three objectives that had formed the three pillars of the World Summit for Social Development, focusing in particular on social integration, the priority theme chosen by the Commission for Social Development for its 2009-2010 session. It also included language from the report of the Secretary-General (A/64/157) and the outcome of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development. The draft resolution invited the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session a study on the impact of the converging world crises on social development. Lastly, it highlighted issues important to the sponsors, such as international cooperation, the role of the United Nations and Governments, and the creation of an enabling environment for social development. His delegation hoped that, following a constructive dialogue among Member States, the resolution would be adopted by consensus.

2. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Kyrgyzstan had become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

(b) Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family (*continued*) (A/C.3/64/L.4, L.7, L.8 and L.10)

Draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.4: Policies and programmes involving youth

3. **Ms. Vaz Patto** (Portugal), speaking also on behalf of the Republic of Moldova and of Senegal, introduced draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.4, which followed on from resolution 62/126 of the General Assembly and resolution 47/1 of the Commission for Social Development. In accordance with the report of the Secretary-General on the progress achieved with respect to the well-being of young people and their role in civil society, the draft resolution dealt with 11 of the 15 priority areas of the World Programme of Action for Youth, the other four areas having been addressed in 2007. Noting that the 15 areas were closely interrelated, she drew particular attention to paragraphs 14 and 15 of the text. The draft resolution acknowledged the positive contribution that youth representatives made to the work of the General Assembly and urged Member States to consider including youth representatives in their delegations, as youth participation would add value to the debate and negotiations on the matter. The sponsors had taken into account the positions of all Member States on the issues, some of which were complex, and hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

4. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Chile wished to become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.7: Follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond

5. **Mr. Hassan** (Sudan) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.7 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Quoting from the third preambular paragraph and paragraph 1, he said that the draft resolution was aimed at ensuring the integration of a family perspective in social protection and at fostering intergenerational solidarity at the family and community level, as called for in the report of the Secretary-General (A/64/134). He thanked the Secretary-General for the timely reminder that the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family would take place in 2014 and noted that the draft resolution requested the Secretary-General to recommend to Members States appropriate ways to observe that anniversary. He hoped that the draft resolution, which was the subject of ongoing informal consultations, would be adopted by consensus.

6. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) announced that Kazakhstan and Thailand had joined the sponsors of the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.8: Proclamation of 2010 as International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding

7. **Mr. Hassan** (Sudan), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.8 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, observed that youth faced many challenges as a result of the widening gap between North and South, growing poverty and rising xenophobia. At the same time, they could also play an important role in the development of their countries, a role that should be encouraged. Member States were therefore encouraged to continue taking steps to enable youth to exercise all their rights. Many young people were affected by poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and HIV/AIDS. There was thus a clear need for Member States to renew their commitment to address such problems and to instil in youth values such as tolerance, rejection of violence and solidarity. To that end, the Group of 77 and China proposed that 2010 should be proclaimed the International Year of Youth and that a world youth conference should be organized under the auspices of the United Nations in order to give young people from around the world the opportunity to discuss youth issues. He hoped that the draft resolution, which was the subject of ongoing informal consultations, would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution: A/C.3/64/L.10: Cooperatives in social development

8. **Ms. Sodov** (Mongolia) introduced draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.10 on behalf of the sponsors, noting that Niger had also become a sponsor. As the Secretary-General had emphasized in his report, cooperatives offered a model of enterprise that was particularly relevant in the current context of economic and food crisis, inasmuch as they promoted the creation of businesses and productive employment and enhanced social inclusion and protection. Mongolia therefore proposed that the year 2012 should be proclaimed the International Year of Cooperatives with a view to encouraging Governments to promote the creation and development of cooperatives and inducing citizens to organize themselves into cooperatives as a means of addressing their economic needs. The initiative — which would not be a year of celebration, but rather one of work involving all stakeholders — would have no budgetary implications. Given the role they played in social and economic development, agricultural and financial cooperatives deserved special attention in the current context. Re-emphasizing the potential benefits of cooperatives with respect to food security and access to credit and savings, she highlighted paragraphs 8 and 9 of the draft resolution and expressed the hope that it would be adopted by consensus.

9. **Mr. Khane** (Secretary of the Committee) said that Nicaragua had become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

(c) Follow-up to the International Year of Older Persons: Second World Assembly on Ageing (*continued*) (A/C.3/64/L.6)

Draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.6: Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing

10. **Mr. Hassan** (Sudan), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.6 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the text built on General Assembly resolution 63/151 and incorporated suggestions from the report of the Secretary-General (A/64/127). He highlighted the requests made to Member States in paragraphs 1, 10, 12, 13 and 14 and drew attention to paragraph 22, which invited the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session a comprehensive report on the current status of the social situation, well-being, development and rights of older persons, taking into consideration the discussions and conclusions of the forty-eighth session of the Commission for Social Development. He hoped that the draft resolution, which was still being discussed in ongoing informal consultations, would, as usual, be adopted by consensus.

Agenda item 104: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/C.3/64/L.14)

Draft resolution A/C.3/64/L.14: United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders

11. **Ms. Kafeero** (Uganda) introduced the draft resolution (A/C.3/64/L.14) on behalf of its sponsors. The text, which was based on General Assembly resolution 63/196 and was still the subject of informal consultations, had undergone several technical and substantive revisions. The third and fifth preambular paragraphs had been modified in the light of the Secretary-General's report (A/64/121) and several paragraphs had been added, notably the fourth preambular paragraph, which acknowledged the effects of climate change on agricultural production in the

countries of Africa and underlined the link between poverty and crime. Two new paragraphs welcomed the initiatives undertaken by the United Nations African Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, despite its difficult financial situation. The Group of African States recognized that Africa could not ignore the importance of new crime trends and needed to strengthen its criminal justice systems. It called upon the General Assembly to highlight the need for continued support of the Institute's activities. Her delegation hoped that the draft resolution would, as in the past, be adopted by consensus.

Agenda item 62: Advancement of women (*continued*) (A/64/38)

(a) Advancement of women (*continued*) (A/64/79-E/2009/74, A/64/151, A/64/152, A/64/164, A/64/190 and A/64/342)

(b) Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (*continued*) (A/64/218)

12. **Ms. Aitimova** (Kazakhstan) said that her Government attached great importance to the creation of a new composite entity to deal with gender issues and was confident that the new entity would enhance protection of the rights and interests of women, promote system-wide gender mainstreaming and contribute actively to fund-raising for a key aspect of development. Highlighting the need to enhance the coherence and efficiency of efforts across the United Nations system by giving the entity a clear mandate, she expressed the hope that it would build on the best practices of the United Nations bodies previously responsible for the advancement of women so as to achieve further progress. Her delegation fully supported the Secretary-General's campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women", believing that it was important to create a robust knowledge base in order to put a stop to the phenomenon. The stakeholders should translate words into action. Convinced of the potential of the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, her Government had made its first contribution to the Fund. It had also implemented the provisions of various international instruments aimed at stemming domestic violence and expected to adopt a law on the matter in the near future.

13. Kazakhstan welcomed the numerous initiatives undertaken by the international community to combat human trafficking and sexual exploitation. It was committed to modernizing its legislation and, with the assistance of non-governmental organizations, was providing support for victims of trafficking. It was also strengthening its criminal justice system in order to ensure that the perpetrators of such crimes did not go unpunished. Believing that it was crucial to strengthen the role of women in society, her Government continued to provide support for mothers and was working to ensure equal economic opportunities for women through capacity-building in entrepreneurship and through credit facilities. Kazakhstan considered the achievement of gender equality and the advancement of women no less important than global safety and sustainable development and pledged its full support for United Nations initiatives towards that end.

14. **Mr. Pournajaf** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that despite the conclusions of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the gap between international legal obligations and their implementation persisted. An action plan for mainstreaming gender in the area of justice should be adopted. To that end, it would be necessary to identify and respond to women's needs.

15. Many challenges remained to be addressed in order to meet those needs: for example, assessing the impact of the crisis on women, achieving a work-life balance, and mitigating the effects of climate change on agriculture and water management — two tasks that were traditionally performed by women — in rural areas. The issue of human trafficking for prostitution must also be addressed, as must other forms of exploitation that constituted modern forms of slavery, by giving women economic opportunities in their countries and by establishing channels to enable them to migrate legally.

16. Armed conflicts, natural disasters and reconstruction efforts put women in situations of vulnerability, which increased their risk of violence and exploitation. Gender imbalances were seldom addressed in the wake of conflicts or humanitarian crises, as a result of which existing disparities were deepened or new ones created. Women's economic and social rights must be upheld in order to promote their empowerment and prevent violence against them. The formulation of a universal law aimed at preventing and combating domestic violence seemed a promising means of strengthening legal protection for women, but

the challenge was to bridge the gap between the establishment of a normative framework and its implementation.

17. Recognizing the need for concerted action, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's global campaign to eliminate violence against women and supported the proposal to appoint a new Under-Secretary-General who would be responsible for overseeing gender justice activities across the United Nations system.

18. **Ms. Mwaffisi** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that her Government was fully committed to the attainment of gender equality and the empowerment of women and had continued to implement the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly through its national policies and programmes. Her country had made significant strides with respect to women's empowerment. Notable examples included the achievement of gender parity in primary education enrolment, a significant increase in female students at the secondary and tertiary levels and the abolition of school fees. With regard to the participation of women in decision-making, 30 per cent of public service posts and parliamentary seats were currently held by women. In order to promote the economic empowerment of women, support was being provided for microenterprise financing and a women's bank had been established to provide loans to women.

19. With a view to ending violence against women, her Government had ratified a number of international human rights instruments, enacted new laws on sexual crimes and trafficking in human beings, and established a national plan for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and children. In addition, in response to the Secretary-General's call to action, a national campaign to stop violence against women had been launched. As most rural women depended on agriculture for their livelihood, it was imperative to reverse the neglect of agricultural development in both official development assistance and government spending and to make productive resources available to women. Her country had enacted several laws aimed at ensuring women's access to land and improving their representation in land tribunals and village councils.

20. The creation of a strong gender entity with strong field presence would provide support for Member States' efforts. Her delegation therefore welcomed the General Assembly's decision to create a composite gender entity within the United Nations. The upcoming reviews of the Millennium Development Goals and of the Beijing Declaration and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, as well as the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, all of which would take place in 2010, would provide opportunities for taking stock of achievements and charting the way forward in furthering gender equality and women's empowerment.

21. **Ms. Rubiales de Chamorro** (Nicaragua) said that her Government was committed to upholding women's rights and achieving equality of opportunity for men and women. It was actively pursuing the objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Those and other international instruments to which her country was a party had served as the frame of reference for the formulation of domestic legislation and policies and for the implementation of programmes in that area. Nicaragua had a national development plan, a social welfare system and a gender equality policy, and had established an institute to oversee gender mainstreaming in national institutions. To promote women's participation in Government decision-making and increase their presence in public service positions, a 50 per cent quota for women had been introduced in all Government institutions and was slated to be extended to other public agencies as well. To curb violence against women, a gender violence unit had been established within the Office of the Public Prosecutor. That unit was responsible for ensuring the effective administration of justice for women and girls. In addition, training had been provided to national officials with a view to eliminating gender-based discrimination in the administration of criminal justice, and the national police had carried out prevention and support activities for women and girls who had suffered domestic violence or sexual abuse. Women now had access to free education and health care, and the country had seen a marked decline in maternal mortality. To promote equal opportunities and eliminate discrimination in employment, steps were being taken to prohibit the practice of requiring women to undergo a pregnancy test as part of the job application process and to inform women of their rights and of the provisions of international instruments that protected them against discrimination in the workplace.

22. Serious problems persisted at the international level, including violence against women migrants from the South. Nicaragua found it most regrettable that the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families had been ratified by only 40 States and concurred with the view expressed in the Secretary-General's report on violence against women migrant workers (A/64/152) that States should ensure the protection of the human rights of all women migrant workers and comprehensively address violence against them through measures to prevent violence, prosecute perpetrators and protect and support victims. Trafficking in women, a modern form of slavery, was an issue of concern for Nicaragua and it was therefore one of the countries working to draw up a global plan of action to combat that scourge.

23. **Ms. Sabja Daza** (Plurinational State of Bolivia) said that the situation of women in her country remained difficult, particularly in rural areas, where indigenous women still bore a heavy burden of household and agricultural work and were subjected to various forms of discrimination and segregation. Nevertheless, significant progress had been made in recent years with respect to gender equality. The principle according to which the only useful work was paid work should be re-examined, and the important role of domestic work in the functioning of the economy and society should be recognized, as should women's contribution to the development of their countries.

24. Her country's new Constitution enshrined women's rights as inalienable and indivisible and as an integral aspect of universal human rights, and placed great emphasis on principles of gender equality, elimination of entrenched patterns of discrimination and promotion of women's participation in all facets of political life. It also guaranteed the right to a life with dignity and freedom from violence, and gave women access to all levels of education, provided for improvements in the health and social security systems and established new principles regarding ownership of land and natural resources. Significant progress had been made with respect to women's participation in political life. All political parties were now required to include equal numbers of men and women on their candidate lists, a quota for women had also been established for the Constituent Assembly and several indigenous women had been appointed to posts in the Administration of President Morales. In the area of health, the new Constitution guaranteed the right to safe motherhood and free maternity care, and a mother-child allowance had been instituted in order to reduce maternal and infant mortality and undernutrition; 510,000 people would receive that subsidy in 2009.

25. Member States should continue their discussions concerning the creation of a new United Nations gender entity, which would make it possible to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in an integrated and comprehensive manner and facilitate gender mainstreaming in the activities of all United Nations agencies and institutions.

26. **Ms. Hong** Wook-jin (Republic of Korea) said that while much progress had been made towards realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women in recent years, numerous women and girls around the world continued to suffer discrimination and violence. As 2010 would mark the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the fifteenth anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, and the tenth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, it would be an appropriate time to review achievements and identify remaining gaps and challenges. As the Secretary-General had pointed out in his reports on the improvement of the situation of women in rural areas (A/64/190) and on violence against women migrant workers (A/64/152), more vigorous initiatives should be undertaken to meet the needs of women in situations of vulnerability. Her country had received many women migrants in recent years, which had prompted the Government to put in place social mechanisms aimed at ensuring respect for their human rights, protecting them from discrimination and violence and facilitating their integration into Korean society.

27. Noting that women were disproportionately affected by the consequences of major global challenges such as conflict and climate change, she welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolutions 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009), which called for an increase in the number of women in high-level positions within the United Nations, especially in peacekeeping operations. Her delegation believed that States' success in overcoming global challenges depended largely on the capacity of the United Nations system to make gender equality and women's empowerment a reality, and

therefore looked forward to the early establishment of a composite gender entity.

28. **Ms. Shira** Hyun-ju (Republic of Korea), speaking as a youth delegate of her country, said that environmental degradation was a growing threat to women, that they should be actively involved in the quest for global solutions to the problem and that gender equality should be recognized as an essential condition for the creation of an environmentally sustainable society. The current global financial crisis was threatening the progress made towards gender equality in the labour market and more must be done to assist the 10 to 22 million women who were at risk of losing their jobs before the end of 2009. Her Government, aware of the difficulties that women faced in striking a balance between family life and a professional career, had introduced a plan for promoting gender equality in employment and achieving work-life balance.

29. **Ms. Stefan** (Liechtenstein) said that investment in gender equality was investment in progress and that the empowerment of women was a precondition for development. Nevertheless, owing to ongoing discrimination and inequality, women remained disproportionately affected by poverty, hunger and food insecurity. She looked forward to the early establishment of the new composite gender entity, which would help consolidate the progress made to date and create synergies in order to improve the Organization's contribution to the promotion of gender equality and the elimination of all forms of violence against women. Such violence was an unacceptable violation of human rights that often went unpunished. Such impunity sent the message that male violence against women was inevitable. States therefore had an obligation to ensure that legal instruments relating to the protection of women's rights were implemented.

30. Her Government was deeply concerned about the increase in sexual violence in conflict situations around the world, notably in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Such violence was not just a by-product of hostilities; it was a method of warfare, and it persisted even after the conflict ended. It was essential to increase the participation of women in leadership positions in conflict resolution and peace processes, and her delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's efforts to appoint more women to such positions. Noting that countries often lacked the resources to bring the perpetrators of acts of violence to justice and that conflict resolution mechanisms were often applied in a discriminatory manner which limited women's access to justice, she welcomed Security Council resolution 1888 (2009), which called on the Secretary-General to offer expertise to assist national authorities in strengthening the rule of law. She underscored the need to protect and support victims and highlighted the role that the International Criminal Court might play in that regard and in ending impunity.

31. **Ms. Lakhova** (Russian Federation), speaking as a member of the legislative assembly of the Russian Federation and vice-chairperson of the legislative committee for labour and social policy and as a representative of the Women's Union of Russia, said that the basic documents of the United Nations on gender equality formed the basis for her country's policies aimed at improving the situation of women. Those documents had been the starting point for a profound transformation of Russian society and institutions and had encouraged the participation of civil society in activities in that area. The principle of gender equality was enshrined in the main legal instruments of the Russian Federation, including the Constitution and federal laws.

32. Her country's socio-economic development programmes contained a broad range of measures that had a direct bearing on the interests of women. Despite the economic crisis, matters relating to people and to the protection of mothers and children were now more than ever a central priority for the Russian Government. The democratic system recently introduced in the Russian Federation was based on the active participation of society as a whole. Current legislation enabled civil society organizations to play a role in political life, and women were well represented in the structures of the executive and legislative branches, including the State Duma, where they held 14 per cent of seats, and the Government, where they headed three key ministries.

33. As part of its labour policy, the Government ensured the protection of women, especially in the education, culture and health-care sectors. Thanks to its support for small and medium-size enterprises and for self-employment among women, the Russian Federation was now the third-ranked country in the world in terms of employment of women in business.

34. Progress towards gender equality would not be possible without the active participation of civil society. The Women's Union of Russia was working

tirelessly to change attitudes with regard to equality, protection of women's rights, education of children and strengthening of families by striving to raise gender awareness among the various social groups and engaging political leaders in constructive dialogue. In cooperation with other organizations, it was pursuing activities to promote gender equality, protect mothers and children and combat violence, alcoholism and substance abuse, drawing the attention of the authorities, the public and the media to those social issues, which affected society as a whole. Much remained to be done in order to achieve equality, however, and only through close cooperation with international organizations and the future United Nations composite entity for gender issues would women be able to take control of their destiny.

35. **Ms. Blum** (Colombia) said that her country had mainstreamed gender in the policies set out in its National Development Plan 2006-2010. The Office of the Presidential Advisor on Gender Equity played a leading role in activities for the advancement of women. In order to put a stop to violence against women, it was important to strengthen legal and institutional frameworks and raise public awareness of the issue. With that in mind, her Government had taken steps to facilitate women's access to justice and help them defend their rights and, in 2004, had established a gender equality observatory to monitor progress in the fight against gender-based discrimination.

36. Colombia supported the view that it was important to incorporate a gender perspective in humanitarian assistance activities and in demobilization and disarmament processes, protecting women from domestic violence and promoting their economic self-sufficiency and their participation in civic life.

37. Strategies for poverty eradication and promotion of entrepreneurship and labour market access should also incorporate a gender perspective. Colombia had mainstreamed gender into its microcredit schemes and its "Families in Action" programme, which served 2.5 million households, providing subsidies directly to mothers, subject to their fulfilment of commitments with respect to child nutrition and education.

38. The United Nations system had an important role to play in protecting the rights of migrant women. Recalling that her country had recently joined other States in sponsoring two Human Rights Council resolutions relating to the advancement of women, she expressed the hope that the new gender entity would be established during the current session and would be allocated adequate political, technical and financial means to enable it to work effectively for the advancement of women all over the world.

39. **Ms. Picco** (Monaco) said that she looked forward to the early appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the issue of sexual violence in armed conflict, pursuant to Security Council resolution 1888 (2009), of which her country had been a sponsor. She was confident that the Secretary-General would also promptly appoint an Under-Secretary-General to head the new gender entity, which should be established as soon as possible and which would have the noble task of defending the human rights of women and girls.

40. Her Government was taking action in that respect not only nationally, through provisions aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women and support mechanisms for victims, but also in the framework of its international cooperation. In several African countries, for example, some 400,000 women were receiving maternal and child health services in facilities financed by the Government of Monaco.

41. **Mr. Valero Briceño** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that his country was building a new model of development that was people-centred and aimed at ensuring equality of men and women. It also had a wide array of legislative instruments designed to combat gender-based discrimination, including laws that ensured safe working conditions for women and, in the domestic sphere, their right to a life without violence. Venezuela was a party to the Inter-American Convention for the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women and since July 2008 had chaired the monitoring mechanism of that unique instrument. Since 2008, special courts had been established throughout the country to hear cases involving violence against women. His Government also attached fundamental importance to the problem of trafficking in women, which it was tackling through an integrated approach that sought to eliminate the root causes, especially poverty.

42. Gender-parity rules established for all elections had enabled more women to hold high-level office, and the current presidents of the National Assembly and Supreme Court were women. Under the aegis of the Ministry of the People's Power for Women and Gender Equality, several institutions providing services for

women had been created, including a specialized development bank that provided loans at discounted rates to women's cooperatives.

43. **Ms. Sow** (Senegal), highlighting the crucial role of women in development and the need for their equitable participation in decision-making, observed that women were still underrepresented in the economic sphere and that Millennium Development Goal 3 would not be achieved by 2015. Gender must be mainstreamed in development policies.

44. Senegal had always included the advancement of women in its overall development policies. It had ratified all international conventions on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and on the rights of children, including girls, and had included in its new Constitution provisions guaranteeing equality of men and women, including with respect to land ownership, education and employment. A law against female genital mutilation and violence against women had been in effect since 1999, and an observatory on family rights, including a component on the rights of women, had been established. Several national and local initiatives for women had helped to increase school enrolment among girls and reduce illiteracy significantly. Flexible and accessible credit programmes had helped combat poverty by supporting economic activity among women.

45. **Ms. Sudhidhanee** (Thailand) said that her country had fulfilled its obligations under the major instruments relating to women's rights. She commended the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which was helping countries to achieve their gender equality goals, and noted that Ms. Chutikul, nominated by Thailand and elected a member of the Committee for the period 2007-2010, was advising a working group of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on the establishment of a commission for the protection and promotion of women's and children's rights.

46. Thailand had implemented a development plan that sought to protect the rights of women and promote their participation in economic and social development. It was working actively to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, including the goal for the elimination of poverty among women. Gender equality was enshrined in the Thai Constitution, and the Government was working to overcome regulatory, economic and cultural barriers to the advancement of women. Thai women had won the right to retain their maiden names after marriage and could choose to enter a wide spectrum of occupations, including jobs related to peacekeeping. Increasing numbers of women were participating in public administration at the national and local levels.

47. **Ms. Halabi** (Syrian Arab Republic) reaffirmed her Government's commitment to the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly and said that it had taken steps to address the 12 critical areas identified in the Beijing Platform for Action with a view to promoting the political, economic, cultural and social empowerment of Syrian women. After analysing the features of poverty in the country, a public agency had developed a comprehensive national strategy for combating poverty and empowering women, particularly in rural areas.

48. As a result of the implementation of its five-year plan for 2005-2010, the tenth such plan, the Syrian Arab Republic had succeeded in narrowing the gender gap in primary education and in increasing women's representation in the legislative, executive and administrative spheres. The Government accorded priority to economic and social development and allocated funds for the advancement of women, applying a gender perspective.

49. The Syrian Arab Republic was working to achieve the liberation of the occupied Golan and to put an end to the suffering of women living under Israeli occupation, which was hindering economic development by forcing the Syrian Government to allocate part of its budget to military objectives rather than to promoting the empowerment of women, reducing gender inequalities and fostering socio-economic progress. Her Government favoured a comprehensive approach to the elimination of all forms of violence against women through the adoption of plans compatible with the conditions in each country.

50. **Ms. Bobi Assa** (Côte d'Ivoire), outlining the measures taken by her Government to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, said that gender equality had been enshrined in the first Constitution of Côte d'Ivoire and remained a fundamental principle. The Directorate of Gender Equality and Mainstreaming within the Ministry of the Family, Women and Social Affairs, supported by gender units within most other ministries, was

responsible for implementing that principle. Côte d'Ivoire had incorporated the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women into its domestic law, and a national strategy to end gender-based violence had been formulated in December 2008 with a view to harmonizing and coordinating the efforts of various entities, such as the victims' centres recently established in Yamoussoukro, Man and Abidjan and the legal assistance services offered by the Association of Women Lawyers of Côte d'Ivoire.

51. The country's poverty reduction strategy paper (2009-2015) also addressed issues relating to women.

52. As part of its national plan of action for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), her Government was encouraging women to participate actively in the peace process currently under way and had recently organized a training workshop on women and peace and security.

53. **Mr. Jeenbaev** (Kyrgyzstan) said that his country had adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Nevertheless, the practice of bride abduction continued, generally involving girls between 16 and 18 years of age. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, following its examination of his Government's third periodic report, had said in its concluding observations that marriage of girls under the age of 18 violated article 16, paragraph 2, of the Convention. Forced marriage was not a Kyrgyz tradition, although it was sometimes perceived as such. A parliamentary committee had examined the issue and held parliamentary hearings on 3 March 2009, during which lawmakers has spoken in favour of raising the minimum marriageable age to 18 years, although it had been agreed that marriage at 17 years could be permitted in exceptional cases. The Family Code established that marriage between a man and a woman was voluntary and gave the spouses equal rights.

54. Both non-governmental organizations and Government agencies were working to reduce the number of bride abductions, but those efforts remained insufficient. To fulfil the country's international obligations, legislators had put forward draft legislation establishing quotas for women in the national audit office, the Administration and financial institutions.

55. **Ms. Werdaningtyas** (Indonesia) said that adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had helped to frame her country's efforts to eliminate violence against women, who were the pillar of development. Indonesia had adopted a long-term plan aimed at encouraging the participation of women in economic development and had incorporated a gender perspective in its budgeting processes. It was also encouraging the participation of women in political life and, following the elections of April 2009, the number of women holding legislative office had nearly doubled. In the economic sphere, the number of women entrepreneurs had increased and, thanks to a cooperatives programme, women had greater access to credit, especially in rural areas.

56. In recent years, there had been a marked feminization of the labour force, with a parallel increase in informal work and migration, which had led to high levels of insecurity among migrant workers, two thirds of whom were women, who were vulnerable to violence. Steps had been taken at the regional and international levels to improve the situation of all migrant workers. Her Government sought to ensure their safety abroad through advocacy. It had also established national legal frameworks and a task force on human trafficking with a view to protecting migrant workers. It had invited countries of destination to enter into mutually beneficial agreements and was working with the International Labour Organization to train national officials in the protection of migrant workers.

57. Her delegation had noted progress in the advancement of women, but was of the view that the international community should, in the long term, increase women's involvement in decision-making by ensuring that they received an education, enabling them to participate in non-agricultural activities and encouraging microfinance and microcredit in order to eradicate poverty, particularly in rural areas. Lastly, with regard to violence against women migrant workers, there was a need to heighten awareness, adopt preventive measures, particularly in the legal realm, and strengthen collaboration between countries.

58. **Ms. Suleiman** (Nigeria) said that debt relief had contributed to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals through, for example, the establishment of poverty reduction strategies such as the Women's Fund for Economic Empowerment, which, in partnership with the Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank, provided loans to women's cooperatives. To promote entrepreneurship among women and facilitate access to credit, Nigeria

had established the Business Development Fund for Women. The educational level of women had improved, as had the net enrolment rate at the primary level, thanks to a national education policy, increased budgetary allocations and the establishment of numerous training centres across the country.

59. Women were playing a growing role in the ongoing political reform process in Nigeria. Under the aegis of a coalition of women's groups, women's organizations were mobilizing leaders, gender experts, legal practitioners and scholars to advocate for improvement in the conduct of elections. A policy of affirmative action for women aimed at reducing the gender gap in key leadership positions had increased the number of women in such positions. Nearly one quarter of senior public officials and nearly one third of judges were women.

60. Her Government had put in place a national policy on sexual harassment in educational institutions. Civil society organizations and the media had joined forces in the quest to ensure a society free of violence against women. Women who had suffered domestic violence or sexual abuse could seek refuge in temporary shelters, where they received free medical care. Penalties were meted out to perpetrators of rape. Judges and magistrates were receiving continuing education on women's rights, and some discriminatory administrative provisions had been declared unconstitutional.

61. Progress had been made, but there were still gaps. Increased technical and financial support from development partners would be key to achieving the advancement of women. Nigeria supported the creation of a composite gender entity.

62. **Ms. Al-Zibdeh** (Jordan) welcomed the adoption of General Assembly resolution 63/311, which called for the creation of a composite gender entity. The establishment of that entity would enable Member States to strengthen the protection of women's rights around the world.

63. Jordan had withdrawn its reservation in respect of article 15, paragraph 4, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which concerned the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile. It supported the Secretary-General's campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women" (2008-2015). A national committee responsible for the advancement and empowerment of women had been set up and an ombudsman's office had been established in Jordan to investigate and address complaints lodged by women, particularly those relating to oppression, discrimination and violence in all its forms. Referring to the anniversary of the various international instruments, she said that much had been accomplished, but much also remained to be done.

64. The issue of gender spanned numerous different areas, whence the interest of all United Nations agencies in strengthening the protection of women's rights. Her delegation looked forward to the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on those issues and believed that women yearned for concrete action rather than promises.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.